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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MOPS](#) [SNAR](#) [CH](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: BARBADOS COAST GUARD COMMANDER TACKLES CORRUPTION, TRAINING

DERIVED FROM: DBHardt

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Newly installed Barbados Coast Guard Commander Sean Reece emphasized the need for further training for his units as the Coast Guard grapples with serious internal corruption issues and regional capacity deficiencies. Reece commended the close cooperation between the Coast Guard and U.S. Southern Command, and conveyed his hope that additional training and material resources could be allocated by the U.S., including more exchanges as well as Barbados-based training exercises. His comments in a meeting with the ChargC) followed a November 13 visit of Chinese Admiral Guan You Fei, who signed a USD \$420,000 agreement with the Barbados Defense Force (BDF) for training and technical assistance. End Summary.

WEEDING OUT THE BAD APPLES

¶2. (C) In a November 18 meeting with ChargC), newly-appointed Barbados Coast Guard Commander Sean Reece confirmed that he had been brought in to weed out internal corruption within the Coast Guard, which he has sought to address effectively and swiftly. In his effort to identify and isolate potentially corrupt officers and seamen, Reece told the ChargC) that he had decided to require all officers to pass a polygraph examination. According to Reece, roughly twenty-five percent of the Barbados Defense Force (BDF) has thus far been polygraphed, starting with those who hold critically sensitive positions. As a result, some officers had already been moved to non-sensitive slots because of their polygraph results. He added that, although the results of the polygraph examination aren't reason enough for dismissal, they are factored into performance and contract reviews. Reece also defended the Coast Guard, noting that there were corruption issues in both the Police Force and Customs, as well as a need among Barbadian agencies to share information and coordinate more closely.

¶3. (C) The ChargC) welcomed Reece's initiative and offered to explore additional assistance that might be brought to bear for such vetting through CBSI or other channels. The ChargC) noted that the concerns about the Coast Guard, which the Prime Minister had even expressed publicly, had limited the ability of our law enforcement agencies to work as closely as they would like with the

Barbados Coast Guard. We hoped that as his efforts to clean house take root, we would be able to do more together.

REGIONAL CAPACITY AND TRAINING NEEDS

¶4. (C) Commander Reece strongly supported expanded regional cooperation. While no inter-territorial issues have arisen from a legal standpoint, due mainly to the Regional Security Service (RSS) treaty, he explained that the major obstacles to closer regional cooperation were logistical, rooted in the limited resources and capacity of Barbados' neighbors. He was amenable to further regional cooperative measures, including a regional coast guard concept, but cautioned that much would depend on the political will of regional governments. He noted that Barbados, which has recently invested heavily in blue water vessels, is willing to do more to patrol within the region, but faces its own operational limits from the cost of fuel and crew salaries and benefits to undertake missions in international waters.

¶5. (SBU) Reece highlighted that, since assuming his current post, he has placed emphasis on training new recruits as well as advanced

training for mid- to senior-level officers. He continues to work closely with the Embassy's Military Liaison Office to identify appropriate courses and take advantage of them when possible. He also mentioned the importance and efficiency of providing training domestically, to ensure more officers are able to make use of such opportunities. Referencing the November 13 visit of Chinese Admiral Guan You Fei, Deputy Head of Foreign Affairs in China's Ministry of National Defense, Reece noted that the USD \$420,000 training and technical aid package signed by the BDF would include not only material support, but also future visits of Chinese instructors to Barbados. Apart from the bilateral training efforts, Reece suggested that it would be useful to encourage regional training as well, given the high level of cooperation within the Caribbean.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Commander Reece is a key supporter of U.S. objectives in the region, a close ally, and an effective military leader. He comes from the land forces of the BDF, and was brought in to the Coast Guard with the specific goal of cleaning house. Embassy agencies will support and track his efforts to combat corruption in the ranks, with an eye toward expanding cooperation in the future to take advantage of Barbados' significant investment in its Coast Guard assets in recent years. Reece's comments regarding the need for continuous bilateral and regional training reflect his longstanding support for USG training. China's most recent security assistance package to Barbados -- the third of its kind -- is similar to packages given recently to Antigua, which provide considerable basic equipment and uniforms rather than sophisticated training or equipment.

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